

W
D519i
1847

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

DELIVERED TO THE

MEDICAL CLASS

OF THE

BERKSHIRE MEDICAL INSTITUTION;

AUGUST 5, 1847.

BY PROF. DEWEY.



PITTSFIELD, MASS.:
CHARLES MONTAGUE.....PRINTER.
1847.

W
D519i
1847
c. 1

Pittsfield, Aug. 6th, 1847.

PROF. DEWEY:

Sir—At a meeting of the Students of the Berkshire Medical College, held yesterday, William P. Bemus of New York being in the Chair and Marcellus M. Frisselle of Mass. acting as Secretary, it was unanimously

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to solicit of you a copy of your excellent Introductory Lecture for publication. We, who have the honor to constitute the above Committee, take great pleasure in expressing the warmest desires of the Class, to which we would add our earnest request, that the publication of your eloquent and able Address, delivered on Thursday last, so grateful to us and so honorable to the Institution, be not withheld.

With great respect, we are yours, &c.

W. F. BEMUS, N. Y.	G. C. LAWRENCE, Ohio.
D. W. HAZELTON, N. H.	H. V. HOLCOMB, Mass.
R. R. BRUCE, Vt.	S. S. FLAGG, Canada East.
J. W. CLYDE, N. Y.	JOHN H. HOLLISTER, Mich.
H. DEWING, Ct.	E. R. BROWNELL, Flor.
J. B. EDELEN, D. C.	J. W. SACKET, Pa.
R. G. COBB, N. C.	S. W. BUTLER, Cher. Nation.
H. J. TURLEY, Ala.	E. W. HARKER, Geo.
J. G. BROWN, Tenn.	S. T. C. WASHBURN, Miss.
S. H. BERGEN, N. J.	M. EARHEART, Mo.

M. M. FRISSELLE, SECRETARY.

TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE MEDICAL CLASS:

MESSRS. BEMUS, HAZELTON, &c.

Young Gentlemen—

I am happy to comply with your polite request, to publish the late Introductory Discourse, in the hope of your gratification and of some good to be effected. The object of medical education possesses the deepest interest, and is not the most perfectly understood. Though not written for publication, I follow the advice of a distinguished friend of us all, in thus committing the discourse to your hands.

With the kindest regards to yourselves

and for the honor of the Class, your friend,

C. DEWEY.

Berkshire Medical Institution,
Aug. 9th, 1847.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

GENTLEMEN OF THE MEDICAL CLASS:

The enthusiasts and the alarmists form two important parts of society. True, they are a relatively small part, for the great mass of mankind take things as they are, and, occupied with their pursuits and enjoyments, look calmly on the passing scenes. But, one class of eyes have ever looked on the moral and civil wastes of the world. They have described the prevalent vices and crimes, the increase of corruption, bribery, intrigue and villany, the departure from the good old times, the alarming sway of fashion and frivolity, luxury and dissipation, the general deterioration in manners and morals, the propensity to excesses of every kind, the seductive tendencies of the arts and sciences, of commerce and manufactures, and the common ruin that impends over the high interests of society. Such was the description of the times in sober New England a century ago; such was the picture of the times in England also, drawn by the actors in the scenes in different periods of her history; such was the portraiture of the christian world in later and earlier centuries by men that then lived. We may ascend to Grecian and Roman history for the same sad accounts of their times compared with ages then past. Their *golden age* had long gone by, and they looked back upon it

with strong yearnings of soul from their *iron* period. Even the sweet bard of Mantua only forgot his sad theme when rapt by the visions of the evangelical prophet he portrayed the glorious things of later times. The same pictures have been drawn of modern times, so that one thinks that the same writers, by some literary metamorphosis, have descended to our days. From many a tongue and pen the same language flows in unceasing streams. These have been severely called the alarmists of the day.

Another class of eyes see only the improvements made or in progress; and they glory in the age in which they live. This has been their theme in past ages; it is their overflowing theme at this day and on both sides of the Atlantic. The world never saw such a period as the present: the spirit of the times; the world in motion; the elements of happy changes working out their great results; gratitude for our life in this propitious day. Such are the emotions of their exulting souls in view of the passing and coming bright scenes. These are the *enthusiasts* of the age.

It is no easy matter for the present generation to compare with itself the past. I object indeed to the sombre picture sometimes drawn, and may not approve all the glowing descriptions of the present. But I love to look upon the latter as they spread out their excellences before us. For reasons to be yet given, the picture, excepting not even its exaggerations, approaches far nearer the truth.

In all periods the world has presented a vast field of interest to the dwellers in it. This is more true of the better educated and more refined, of the most active and enterprising in any of its pursuits, and especially, of the literary, the philosophical, and the professional man. Standing on an elevation, these have a wider prospect of the past and the present, and their anticipations of the future crown it with interest and impel them to effort.

The general course of our race has been onward and upward, in the developement of the powers of intellect, the improvements in mechanical contrivances, the extension and importance of arts and all the appliances of life, the ascertaining and following out of the laws of nature, and in the results of philosophy in all its departments upon the elevation and refinement of the human family, and in the diffusion of the active and benevolent principles of a benign and holy religion. I refer, of course, to those portions of the world where circumstances have favored and advanced all these.

One of these is our home. Connected as all these are by the printing press and by steam, each soon realizes all the knowledge and improvements of the others. Placed too under the influence of principles which give more scope and energy to the activity and enterprise of the people, we advance with greater rapidity than the rest. What Sir Humphrey Davy asserted of the English compared with continental Europe, as a nation "pre-eminently active," and as following their objects with more "force, fire and constancy," is palpably true of Anglo-Americans.

It is yet to be seen to what extent free institutions and equality of rights and privileges are to raise our country. Judging from the past, what can be the end of the progress? It is illimitable. What indeed will next come up in the scale of advancement, no mind can tell. The month before the Steam Engine was employed, by the genius of Fulton, in actual operation in navigation, would have presented a scene of the most intense interest, if it could only have been known to the enterprising part of the world what a mighty instrument was being applied to produce changes and results which have astonished the world, and the present light of which is only the dawn of the day to come. So of the American Telegraph: if it could only have been foreseen in its operations and present attained consequences, and if it could have been known that Morse was

passing his nights sleepless and agitated as his mind vibrated on the waves of its mighty effort and swelled with the tumult of his own thoughts laboring for action, what an excitement would have shaken the world of mind. Sleep would have fled from the earth, and minds would have groaned together for the stupendous results to be accomplished. But all was still except in one heart; and the world of mind rolled on in its easy course. The thunder soon followed the lightning, and shook the whole country. Yet our cold reason could embrace only a tithe of the consequences, and the wary capitalist doubted whether it would pay three per cent. on the investment. But already have the lines been doubled and tripled to perform the accumulating business, and adequate capital secured, and hundreds on hundreds of miles been added to the line which is constantly extending.

So it ought to be and must be. The world cannot be prepared for the results till they are seen and felt. This is the noiseless course of that Divine Providence, which sees the end from the beginning, and adapts the whole to the reason and wants of his noblest creation below.

Even now other minds may be struggling in things destined yet to astound the world. For *progress is the order of the day*; because Infinite Wisdom sits on the throne and sends forth his moving energy upon minds, and it is his plan of operations to show forth his greatness and goodness through the instrumentalities which he employs. For illustration, take the mighty power of gravitation. The ancients understood its general influence. The word is of Latin origin, spoken seven hundred years before the Christian era, and came to the Romans from the wreck of a language of far more ancient origin. They knew its power—they felt it—they saw how matter on the earth and circling planets obeyed it—and they knew how their globose form and motions were the result, and how from their motions ellipses were produced and calculations made, so that they fore-

told their appearance, as Cicero states,* for ages to come. The true system of astronomy is as old as the age of Pythagoras, more than five centuries before the christian era. There was little use for more wisdom on this subject in those ages. But when arts and commerce began their expansive career, there was need, for their extension, of new and more accurate investigations of this mighty power, to promote commerce and navigation and discoveries and to increase mechanical energies, and Newton is sent to unfold the laws and operations that had been hidden in the secrets of nature. Other planets and satellites must be discovered and the power of gravitation must be fully unfolded to bless the world. Little dreamed the ancients; and as little dreamed the moderns of the progress attained, till gravitation was made to reveal the existence and place of another planet, and the greatest achievement of mathematics was effected so that the world of powerful minds exulted at the stupendous result.

Thus, the advancements in science and art and in all philosophy, *take place as they are wanted to move on things to more beneficent results.* This gives the subject prodigious interest, while it directs the mind to the great Ruler of the whole. For the common purposes of navigation those astronomical principles by which a ship's place is ascertained and her latitude and longitude known, are as advantageous as ever, and even more important as the more rapid power of steam is employed. But we began to need greater facilities of land communication, and the Rail Road comes forth to effect the desired end. Time had become more valuable in the business of life, and while space is annihilated by the locomotive, incalculable benefits spring up in the pursuits of life. The over-land mail to India, originated by the same wants of commerce, accomplishes objects in two months which had required a year by the Cape of Good Hope. The merchant, the missionary, and their effective agents know the state of things on the other side of the globe in less

than one sixth of the time, and, at a great saving remittances can be made with such ease and rapidity. And over a country like ours, so extensive, with a people of restless activity, with minds of the finest cast for the pursuits of business and aiming at important results, with the teeming productions of inventions, arts, manufactures, trade and industry, and with the diffusion of all the material objects that minister to the happiness of men, with liberty and its institutions offering the greatest incentives to individual effort or combined action, the Telegraph comes up as by enchantment to equalize the advantages—to aid in diminishing the evils of monopoly and craft, to put into the hands of millions what had been controlled by few, to spread at once facts and principles and bind together more closely the elements which are necessary to union and harmony of action, to make man more emphatically dependent on his fellow, and yet more independent, and thus equal to him in all important respects. For moral and intellectual good, as well as for political and commercial, the American Telegraph is the unrivaled discovery of the age. The others are important, indispensable ; but this enhances their value beyond all calculation. The chemical world was not prepared for the galvanic battery till the time of its appearance forty years ago, nor for some of its most important results till they were afterwards developed, nor for the great improvement in its power till the Telegraph made it necessary ; and all this is done too when the wonders of the Telegraph are beneficial to an extent the world had never seen, and never anticipated, and never before desired, because it was not within the range of supposed possibility. This was not playing with the lightnings as was once fancifully said of Franklin, but it is yoking them to the car of knowledge and business and happiness, and bidding them, with unerring certainty, to give speed to human thought and energy. Like all human things it may be abused, but how little is the exposure. Who will send his profanity or obscenity or

pollution along the electric wires? who will falsify by lightning, when the next flash will make the correction and expose the very name of the scoundrel. Never have the tales of Arabian enchantment approached so near to a reality of existence.

The “*Letheon, or Etherization*” is a discovery of this time, when the advance of surgery and its immensely varied and successful applications, render more important such a means of alleviating human suffering. If the discovery shall prove to be harmless and safe, it will in the language of Sir H. H. Inglis, President of the British Association, at their late meeting, “long place the name of its author among the benefactors of our common nature,” associating it with the inventor of the Telegraph, the “great discovery” of the times.

In the subject of education in all its bearing on mind and things, there has been the same onward movement, as improvements were demanded and made, and as these required higher and more important improvements. Whoever looks back to the state of the Colleges at the beginning of this nineteenth century, and the subjects of study and the means provided for the student, and compares the progress and consequences, will realize the mighty change. All this has led, not to the neglect of the mind of the great mass of the people, but to its more general education, and thus has extended its advantages with nearly equal steps and with incalculable and unsurpassed effect. The time in which all those results are attained made them more necessary than ever before. The higher Institutions of learning are essential for the preparation and exaltation of mind for the superior influences to be exerted on all sides; and the common mind must be enlightened more fully, or it can not harmonize with the superior energies and thus employ its powers in the higher production of good and the greater diffusion and enjoyment of happiness. Both must move on with nearly equal velocity where free principles and equal rights are enjoyed, or the balance of power will be broken and confusion and every evil will ensue.

It was a wise and enlarged view of the wants of the people and the increase of their advantages, whieh led to the late noble donation of Lawrence to the University of this Commonwealth. His letter announcing the gift, alike honorable to his head and heart, and in advancee of many rieh men, was the simple breathings of the spirit of the times. And it is in the same wise foresight, that other Colleges and higher institutions have been sharing in the liberality of their patriotic benefactors. The wisdom thus diffused has already traed out wants of an equally important charaeter, originating in the pursuits of agriculture and business, for which no effeetual provision is made and for whieh the spirit of a Lawrenee must make, and in due time will make, the endowment. The work is only begun. Science and art pour the treasures of wealth to overflowing into those hands whose minds understand their own interest, and that of the community, to require this applieation of their beneficence to make more full and free and diffusive the streams of prosperity.

In the capital of these United States the Smithsonian benefaction, eoneived in the dawnings of the same spirit, is yet, I trust, to be a munifieent eo-operator in the advancement of science, art, meehanies, and generally of *useful knowledge*, whose course has been so auspiciously begun, and whose object ought to be benefieently pursued.

States are moving in this great work. Legislators see the grand end to be attained by and through and for the treasures of a State. Funds are wonderfully multiplied and applied. The Geological Surveys of so many States, wrought out as their importance begins to be felt and their results can be made produetive of good, are the index of the spirit of the times. Agriculture, the first of arts, and the mother of all others, reeives the benefit. The popular demand of the greatest good of the great whole—the very principle of the Divine Goodness and the end attained in its infinite operations—is heard on every side

and re-echoed from mountain and valley, river and lake and sea ;—and let our response be, “ God speed the right.”

Time does not permit the pursuit of this topic, or to give utterance to the heavings of the heart as the images of future progress fit across the pathway before us. I turn to the great changes, which the spirit of the times has made in the education of the medical profession, and to some of the prospects before the medical student. I am not to attempt any extended history, but only to glance at what has been witnessed. My own head testifies to every eye, that I may have some remote recollections of the past, and, as I ought not to be ashamed of that which time has made venerable, I may speak of dates as well as facts.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were but *four* medical schools in our country, and at the present time their number exceeds thirty.* The first lectures on anatomy in the United States, formed a single course at Philadelphia, and were delivered by Dr. Shippen to ten students in 1764 (1762?) Little progress was made in medical schools till some years after the close of the American Revolution.

The winter of 1805—6 was spent by me in this village in teaching *the young idea how to shoot*, near the spot where these medical Lectures are annually delivered. Our respected President of the Berkshire Medical Institution, who grows younger and more powerful as he advances in life, and to whom I gladly make the differential salutation to day, returned that winter from the medical school at Dartmouth College, commenced his career of successful practice and appropriated to it his powers and life till honors have settled on his brow. To his efforts in no small degree this Institution owes high obligations. In 1822 the first course of lectures was given, preparatory to the charter of the Berkshire Medical Institution, whose first commencement was held at the close of the lectures in 1823. Its grad-

* See Note A.

uates have gone forth annually to honor themselves and the Institution, and to do good and receive good in the world. Another year will complete the first quarter of a century since the Berkshire began its prosperous course, and if its alumni only desire it, they can nobly commemorate it in the first Medical celebration. For, here have choice spirits been indoctrinated in the principles of sound medical philosophy and practice. Here have been fostered the aspiration for usefulness and honor which have made its alumni men among men and physicians among their fellows, and borne not a few of them to places of distinguished usefulness in other institutions.

Medical Students have ever been scattered, as they must generally be, in the offices of physicians, and in the early part of the century, few advantages were afforded them. The libraries of their teachers were generally small, though much better adapted to the known wants of the profession at that time than can now be easily imagined. The course of instruction was exceedingly imperfect. The establishment of Medical Schools was therefore an immense advance on the past; and a few months, annually, of such advantages and intense application as they made necessary, with access to larger libraries, produced admirable results in medical education.

Though the advantages in the offices of physicians over the country have greatly increased, there has necessarily been great deficiency in instruction. The press has indeed teemed with medical works; facts mingled with fallacious reasonings and ingenious and imaginary hypothesis, so that the ordinary physician felt obliged to stand on the conservative ground of acquired knowledge. He knew not what could be esteemed reliable authority when change on change succeeded in rapid succession, and hypothesis swept away hypothesis like men of straw as they were. The medical world resembled the boiling surges of the ocean, lashed into fury by the tempest, and the end to be answered was difficult to be seen. But a rela-

tive calm has succeeded—the true philosophy of medicine has been greatly advanced—the elements of confusion have subsided—clearer skies and a brighter sun cheer the world, while many a dense cloud and lowering fog has been swept away. The temple of medical science has been rearing its walls and pillars and turrets, and stands the more immovable in consequence of the storms that have beat upon it.

The great Bacon said—“Medicine is a science which hath been more professed than labored, and yet more labored than advanced; the labor having been rather in a circle than in progression.” There was too much of truth in this severe sentence, but it was then equally true of his own Natural philosophy. In the inductive course pointed out by him for the study of philosophy, the medical world has found the thread to conduct the student from the labyrinth in which he was involved. Though many a zealous advocate of medicine has made more intricate the passages and stretched his own threads in the way and deceived the cautious observer by his false signs of coming light, others have with equal zeal opened the passages, cleared away the obstructions, cut asunder the thrcads of error, disenthralled the struggling lover of truth, and led his feet to the glorious light of the sun of science. The libraries of physicians contain more works that are trustworthy and practical, and higher advantages are enjoyed by the student. Still the great defect is the absence of regular study and recitation of standard authors on the widely extended subjects of the profession, conducted by minds deeply imbued with the vast amount of medical knowledge which this age has accumulated and diffused. The truth is that no science has possessed more zealous cultivators, or has made greater advances in this century. The field of knowledge has been immensely enlarged. The advantages enjoyed at the Medical Institutions, have hardly kept pace with the extended demands; or rather, medical students have not been able to enjoy adequately the facilities which

will bring up their acquisitions to the increasing requirements of the public, and especially of those medical men who must give the tone in the case, who know the more perfectly what is and can be attained by the student, and what he must obtain to hold the standing demanded by the times and the spirit of the times.

It has often been the subject of discussion in the few past years,—*in what way can the profession be elevated?* Various expedients have been proposed. Certainly there is a wide-spread conviction that much more must be accomplished, and can be effected, and that the united views of medical men and schools will form and can easily form a public opinion which none can successfully resist or control. The reason is, not that the present attainments are *low*, but that they must be *higher*; not that those entering the profession are *weak* men, but that they must be *stronger*; not that the profession has not made *great advances*, but that the state of the world, and therefore honor and self-respect, have stronger claims than have yet found a response. Being a vastly important profession, its very importance requires elevation. The means of doing this are demanded because the improvement is necessary.*

To elevate a profession, its members must be elevated. There is no other way. If the older cannot, or will not come up to the point, the *younger must*. The question recurs—*What shall be done?*

To answer this question, a convention of medical men was holden in the city of New York in May, 1846, consisting of about one hundred and twenty, from fourteen States. The chief object accomplished was the appointment of Committees to report to the Convention the next year on the points involved in the question. In May, 1847, a convention of about three hundred delegates, from the greater portion of the States, and from many Medical Schools and Societies, met in Philadelphia.

*See Note B.

After hearing and discussing the Reports of Committees, the Convention resolved itself into the "American Medical Association," appointed its officers and various committees for this great purpose, or, in their language, "for elevating the standard of medical education; for promoting the usefulness, honor and interests of the medical profession; for enlightening and directing public opinion in regard to the duties, responsibilities, and requirements of medical men, for exciting and encouraging emulation and concert of action in the profession, and for facilitating and fostering friendly intercourse between those who are engaged in it."*

Both Conventions require that the standard of education preliminary to the study of medicine should be raised. The *facts are said to be* that few medical students have received a collegiate education—that many have only a tolerable academic education in preliminary studies—and that many come from ordinary occupations, with a very defective common education, to the study of medicine. It is admitted on all sides that the knowledge of the medical student cannot be too extensive in its subjects or amount; which is equally true in all the learned professions, and yet no exact course is designated for and in the other professions. The Committee, however, propose a "uniform standard of preliminary education for medical students which shall be of a moderate character, in the first instance too low rather than too high, and yet of such extent as shall insure both the knowledge and discipline necessary." It is too obvious for remark, that this is a point of exceeding difficulty, and that only general advice can be given to the medical schools, or be followed by them; and that there must be wide room for the exercise of the judgment of those in whose hands is the right of receiving medical students into their offices, and of those who have the power to bestow the degree of M. D. or to grant licences. The sentiment is likely

* See Note C.

to find a more extended influence, that the public will soon learn who are qualified physicians and who are not, *without any limited and statute-like* requisites for preliminary education.*

Another point before the Convention was, that the power of teaching should be separated from that of giving licenses or degrees, or that degrees should be adjudged by a body specially designated for that purpose, and which should not be solely or chiefly the teachers of the medical schools. This subject is referred to a committee for a report at the next meeting of the "American Medical Association." Dr. Parrish of Philadelphia, however, opposed "a change in the present system," but urged "additional checks in conducting it."† The intrinsic difficulties of effecting any important change, arising from the vested rights and the duties required by charters of the medical schools from the State governments, will probably give to the plan of Dr. Parrish a practical operation over the country. The State governments cannot be expected to give a simultaneous change to so many charters of medical institutions, or consider the proposed *change more safe and politic, or more consistent* with the character of our institutions. At this Institution and at Woodstock, a Committee of the State Medical Society is appointed and associated with the Professors and Trustees, in the examination of candidates and in deciding on their merits.

Another subject acted upon by the Convention was the conditions of conferring the degree of M. D. The resolutions adopted were of the following character :

Resolution 1. That the Colleges extend the period of medical lectures "from four to six months." I shall ask your attention to this in a few moments.

Resolutions 2, 3 and 4 respect the requisites for the examination of a candidate for M. D. The Berkshire long since adopted their principles, and have acted in accordance with them.

* See Note D. † See Note E.

Resolution 5. "That the several branches of medical education, already mentioned in the body of this report, be taught in all the Colleges; and that the number of Professors be increased to seven."

The branches are the "Theory and Practice of Medicine; Principles and Practice of Surgery; General and Special Anatomy; Physiology and Pathology; Materia Medica, Therapeutics and Pharmacy; Midwifery, and Diseases of Women and Children; Chemistry and Medical Jurisprudence." All these have been taught, with Botany, in the Berkshire Medical Institution, by six Professors; and, if they continue to be well taught, the object of the resolution is effected in our Institution. In respect to Pathology and Botany, the Berkshire has long been in advance of most of the medical colleges, and appropriated a whole course to Pathology alone, and adequate lectures to practical Botany; and yet, Botany, or Natural History, generally are not mentioned among the requisite subjects of study given by the Committee. Our honor is compromised in sustaining the spirit of the resolution.

Res. 6. "That it be required of candidates that they shall have steadily devoted three months to dissections." The importance of this subject is here maintained, as well as at Woodstock.

Res. 7 maintains the duty of instructors to afford clinical practice, and of colleges to require of candidates *Hospital practice for one session*, "whenever it can be accomplished"—an important resolution for the physician, and carried to all practical extent in the schools. The generality of students, who do not reside in the large cities, know what estimate to place on the amount of Hospital practice they enjoy during the lectures in those places.

Res. 8 urges on medical schools "to adopt some efficient means for ascertaining that their students are actually in attendance upon the lectures." The attendance at the Berkshire

may be confidently compared with that of other institutions. The student, who intends to be a candidate for M. D., feels impelled to close attendance on the lectures. His examination will show his attendance, and that is the great reliance.

Res. 9. "That it is incumbent upon all schools and colleges granting diplomas, fully to carry out the above requisitions." The Berkshire has ever been attentive to the spirit of public opinion, however expressed.

Res. 10. "That it be considered the duty of preceptors, to advise their students to attend only such institutions as shall rigidly adhere to the recommendations herein contained." Many preceptors over the country have attended lectures at two or three Medical Schools, and have a tolerably correct apprehension of their relative advantages, and are qualified to advise their students on so important a matter. Their judgment, aided even by the advice of the resolution, the Berkshire will rely upon in the future, as it has in the past.

To advert, now, to the first resolution—a lecture term of six months.

The Berkshire Medical Institution will respond to all the improvements which the most favored institutions shall adopt and effectually carry out. From the character of its Trustees and Faculty, and from the spirit of its alumni and students, I hazard nothing in the opinion, though it is only individual opinion, that the Berkshire will maintain its proper place in the long line of its contemporaries.

The subject, however, is too important to be thus disposed of. I ask you to look at its various aspects. Connect with it the proposed *seven* lecturers, and the several subjects to be taught already enumerated, and their relative importance. Now, in the term of four months, or sixteen weeks, with six lecturers, and six lectures a day, or rather *eleven* lectures a week—and the first week not spent in introductory lectures alone, and the last week not given up to examinations alone—

there are delivered *eighty-eight* lectures. With even an additional lecture and the term of six months, there must be fewer lectures a day; as four lectures daily for six months, or six lectures for four months, amount to the same number. The preference is to be given to the shorter term and the greater number of daily lectures. Six and seven hours a day can be given by medical students to the lectures. They must learn to have their minds in an active state, in professional life, for fourteen hours a day. There is no difficulty in turning the mind to the consideration of several subjects in succession. This is to be learned in forming this habit of study. If they cannot do this, they will be ill prepared for the examination of the various forms of disease, and of the different phases of the same disease, which must occur to the active practitioner every day, and be in truth unfitted for a rational connection with life and its business and responsibilities. The exercise of mind in attendance on many lectures a day is alone an important part of education. The number should be as great as proper activity of mind will admit. The students will learn far more in proportion from six or seven lectures than from three or four, and their minds be in a better state of training; but the time of the course must not be long. The expense, too, of a six months' course, or even of five, will be a serious objection in the large cities, and prevent many from attending there. The country schools will be far more able to prolong the course, and increase their numbers. But the course is already long enough.

The truth is, that a course for six months employed, with effort, is *too long*; without effort, it is *too short*, and should be continued through the year; and a shorter course, with strong, energetic effort, is for the same reasons to be preferred.

It is to be observed, too, that a prolonged course will diminish the amount of attendance on the lectures in the cities, unless the students reside there. *Many more* will not stay through the course.

If the truth may be told, there is already too much *oral* instruction—too much of *lecturing*, in proportion to the *study employed*. There is more need of actual recitations of the first works of the science, in the offices of physicians, and especially under highly qualified physicians, connected with clinical practice, so far as it can be pursued. It is for this reason that a *Reading Term*, as it has been called, has been established and long carried on at this Institution and some others. The object has been, for twelve to twenty weeks to give the students this very advantage, with demonstrations in anatomy and dissections for many weeks, with daily recitations, and the writing of medical theses. The *Summer* courses, at some places, have been formed to meet this precise want; but they have often too far followed the course of the lecture term, and given far too much *oral teaching*—too much of regular lecturing. The advantages of study and recitations are in such cases too little obtained.* True, the easier method is taken; for it is a more difficult matter to make preparation for profitable recitations than for regular lectures. A *good* lecturer may be rare enough, but a good teacher, with the tact of teaching, is less common. Some of this character are found over the country—physicians of tact; and, though their instructions are brief, they are pithy, pointed, lucid, and often recurring.†

Having been long engaged in teaching in a college and in medical schools, and in various departments, I am fully satisfied, and distinguished gentlemen in the same employment have the same opinion, that there is far too much *lecturing* for the benefit of the student. It is an evil in colleges, as well as in medical schools. The method of correcting this evil in the European Universities is well known. Regular recitations under qualified instructors can alone remove the evil here.

The Berkshire Medical Institution has preferred, for good reasons, a shorter Lecture Term, with six lectures daily, and

*See the close of Note A. †See Note F.

a Reading Term, to accomplish, with practical anatomy and recitations, the great end of Medical Education. Great advantages have followed already, and the extension of the plan will effect the most desirable results. Let there be two terms in the year—one for Lectures, and the other for Reading and Demonstrations; and let the expenses be brought within the reasonable means of students, and the object of the American Medical Association will be effected in one Institution.

His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth, whose hand is found in every good work, and who honors us with his presence and smiles to-day, will appreciate the views presented, and aid the Berkshire, I trust, in advancing the interests of this noble profession.

Referred as so many of the preceding heads are *for future reports*, nothing can be considered as definitely settled by the "American Medical Association." The views presented clearly show that these subjects require the careful re-examination of the Association.

The gentlemen of the Medical Class will see from these facts and reasons the position of influential members of the profession on this great topic. The requirements which in their view seem to be demanded are—1. Higher preliminary education of students: 2. A greater amount of instruction by *lectures* and *other ways*, in a wider range and more thorough examination of subjects of medicine: 3. A more full attendance on the lectures at the medical schools, and more clinical practice: and 4. More critical examination of those who are to receive the degree of M. D. The prosperity and honor of the student and the country is the grand aim.

It has been thrown out in some quarter that the city institutions have been aiming, through the Conventions and the Association, to elevate themselves and to destroy the country schools. I have too high a consideration of the intelligence and patriotism of the Association to give the least credence to such

a suspicion. I am impelled to discountenance such an insinuation, from their love of their profession, and their collection from all parts of the land, as well as from their knowledge of the wants of the country. Some few men, who suppose a city to be a *universe* and to contain all things that a *universe* ought to contain, and who have little knowledge of the means of medical education in the country, have occasionally shown their hostility in various ways to country institutions. But that such a body of medical men, assembled professedly for a high and important object, from various medical institutions and societies, from the North and the South, the East and the West,—men of high aims and correct principles,—should be engaged in measures for the extermination of the schools established by the various State Governments,—the thought is monstrous, and the supposition preposterous: this end is utterly unattainable.

City and country make up the whole community—the former relatively few in numbers, the latter constituting the mass—each possessing its peculiar advantages—each dependent upon the other, and bound to be co-laborers in the great cause of humanity—each requiring medical colleges adapted to the condition of society.

The cities concentrate intelligence and wealth, but not quite all of either; and they can no more contain all the intelligence than all the wealth of the land, or concentrate all the vice and disease than all the virtue and health of the people. Even many diseases of the cities are widely diffused in the country. The great body of physicians must be spread over the land, and they need acquaintance with the diseases of the country, and preparation suited to the emergencies that must occur. The expenses, too, of their education must be kept within the means of the great body of those who engage in the medical profession. Medical schools are, therefore, of the highest importance in the country, and in different sections of the country. Woe betide the land, when only the rich and the educated

sons of cities become the physicians of the whole country ! The wise will have a regard in all this to the character of our people, our institutions, our enterprise and activity, and the manly spirit which freedom infuses as our birthright into the veins of our countrymen. The institutions of Europe are unfitted to our soil. Unfettered as we are from the aristocracy of power and wealth, the people will never yield to the aristocracy of mere influence, education, or sectional claims. The controlling spirit must be a public spirit, founded in common sense and common rights and aiming at the common general advantage. Political cliques alone can have any duration ; and all our history proves that *mene, mene, tekel*, are written upon them from the beginning.

The “American Medical Association” is to express the opinion of the medical profession over the country, and not of even many distinguished names in the cities alone. It must carry the country with it, or it will fail to effect any considerable good. In the language of one of the reports before mentioned, “The country practitioners form the great bulk of the medical community—they are the medical public, and the popular will is expressed through them.” Let that will be expressed by them, and not by a few of the profession as a clique, but as an *American Medical Association*, and, as that report asserts, I believe, “that any changes in the existing order of things which it may propose to the medical colleges of the country will meet with the most respectful consideration.” Then the profession, which supplies the students to the colleges, will give the tone to the whole.

The means of high medical education are accessible in many country institutions. Every intelligent man of the large cities, who understands the history of a barrel of flour, knows that the *materiel* of Anatomy is abundant and can be transported any where and every where—that Railroads, and Steamboats, and Transportation Lines, and Expresses, and the like, make

the movement of the *materiel*, of apparatus and machinery, and all the *vis motrix* of a medical school, and all the *vis insita* itself, a matter of the least difficulty, so long as the country commands and overflows with money, the *pabulum vitae*, which the great cities are constantly diffusing over the land. Can the means and advantages have been wanting in our medical institution, when from it have gone some of the most accomplished lecturers to the dignified higher schools, and when it has been able to supply their places with the same sort of excellence? True, the cities have also afforded to the country schools some of their finest lecturers, whose talents would have been buried unless these fields of usefulness had been opened before them. So let the exchange and interchange go on, not in the spirit of rivalry or opposition, but of honorable emulation and generous fraternity, which ever diffuses good and happiness among men.

In consistency with the main principle, it is certain, that *changes and advances will be soon made, if the spirit of the times demands them.* In anatomy, pathology, and all the branches, many times the amount formerly exhibited in the medical schools of the country, has for years been taught in the Berkshire Institution. The course is onward.

The "American Medical Association" cannot design to increase the influence of the profession by diminishing the number who shall enjoy its honors. I have no sympathy with such unworthy suggestions. It is well known, that in the thirty-three or more Medical Institutions have, been in the last year about five thousand medical students, and that about thirteen hundred and fifty have been graduated. Perhaps a hundred of these will not follow the profession, so that twelve hundred and fifty may be taken as the supply from the schools. A considerable number besides have received license. Calculation has shown that this number is not equal to the demand in our country, considering the rapid increase of population. Instead of dimin-

ishing the number entering the profession, honor and patriotism demand an increase in such a way as shall not weaken but strengthen its powers. The prospect for places and services is all that those now in the course of instruction can desire.

I am happy, young gentlemen, thus to present you with the highest motives for activity, diligence, perseverance, and the full employment of time and powers. To the ordinary and personal considerations, which every noble and generous mind must feel, are superadded extraordinary reasons contained in the opinions of distinguished members of the profession in the American Medical Association, and generally over the United States. Though you may perhaps place some of them on the list of the alarmists or *croakers* of the day, who have forgotten what they once were, very many you will rank among the rational *enthusiasts* of the age. These must have an influence on your teachers as well as on yourselves. The active effort of the former needs no pledge from me;—you will see it and admit it in the coming weeks. Let them have the active co-operation, the earnest attention and efforts of the students, and your advancement will be seen and felt by yourselves and acknowledged by others, and the golden harvest will be your reward.

“ Chemistry and Anatomy are the fundamental branches of medical science,” and Botany lies with no small importance among the foundation stones. Of the three, it may be said, “ any attempt to give a medical education in which they should be neglected, would be like attempting to erect a superstructure without a basement.”

Young Gentlemen, the materials and the work are before you. Those materials it is your part to form into that superstructure, in which you may repose with honor and profit, and enjoyment.

Finally. For honorable and gratifying success, goodness of

character is all-important. Honesty of purpose, unwavering fidelity, and all the lively sympathies and kindly feelings of our nature, are required in him who is the physician of our families. Religion too, unaffected and pure, adds high grace to such a man. At any rate, and in the language of a distinguished lecturer, "The physician must entertain a respect for the great truths of the christian religion. For religion is the fountain of virtue which is the safeguard of our liberty, and the pledge of social order. Free our people from the fear of Bible penalties and the hope of Bible rewards, and I should tremble for your free institutions and your domestic peace. The morality of any nation is either derived from or sustained by its religion.—In this view every man who loves his country, every friend of social order, every moral man, is bound to lend his countenance and support to the institutions of religion. My leading object in this matter however, is to charge you, whatever may be your own opinions, even if you can not aid and elevate the religious sentiments of your patients,—to charge you, by all that is dreadful in death, by all that is hopeful and cheering in the prospect of future happiness, to seek neither by word or act to abate one tittle of the christian faith. Religion, whatever is its influence on the sunny days of our existence, presents herself in mild, divine benignity when darkness gathers on our path. Is there a God that *must delight in goodness*? What standard of goodness is so high as the scriptures? or, what class of men so good as those who really live by its precepts?" Knowledge and wisdom you must acquire, but goodness of character is indispensable.

NOTES.

Note A, Page 13.

A medical department was established in Philadelphia in 1765, and Dr. Shippen made Professor of Anatomy. When the College of Philadelphia was merged in the University of Pennsylvania by charter in 1791, the distinguished Rush was elected Professor of the Institutes and Practice of Medicine. At the beginning of the century this Medical School had entered upon that high career, by which its celebrity was established in the names and efforts of its learned Professors, so that it numbered in the session of 1801—2 over 130 students, of whom 21 formed the graduating class. Its advantages were little enjoyed at that time by the students of New England. It was too remote.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of the city of New York was instituted in 1768 in connection with Columbia College—some lectures were given—interrupted by the war for our independence—re-organized again in 1784, but no degrees conferred till 1793. In 1807 it received an independent charter, and urged its onward and distinguished career.

The Medical Department of Harvard University was established in 1783, Dr. Warren having given lectures on Anatomy and Surgery in 1781 and 1782. His son has through a long life held and honored the first lectureship in the School. The lectures in the beginning of the century were delivered in Cambridge. Though the connection is still preserved with that venerable University, the School has its own College and lectures in Boston, and has long ranked high among the Medical Institutions.

The Medical Department of Dartmouth College began its lectures in 1798 and soon numbered classes of 20 to 30 students. It was for many years the prominent institution in New England, and well deserved the reputation it attained. It offered great advantages for that period.

These *four* were the only medical institutions in the United States at the beginning of the present century. The following list will show how rapidly and extensively they have been multiplied.

- 1807. The Medical School of Baltimore received its charter.
- 1812. Western District Medical School, at Fairfield, N. Y. Removed to Geneva College and became the Geneva Medical School in 1835.
- 1813. Medical Institution of Yale College.
- 1817. Medical Department of Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky.
- 1818. Vermont Academy of Medicine, at Castleton, in connection with Middlebury College, and a few years ago received an independent charter.

1818. Medical College of Ohio, at Cincinnati.

1820. Medical School of Maine, at Bowdoin College.

1823. Berkshire Medical Institution, connected with Williams College till its independent charter in 1837.

1824. Medical College of South Carolina, at Charleston, new organized in 1832.

1825. University of Virginia, at Charlottesville.

1826. Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, connected with Jefferson College at Cannonsburgh, and made independent by charter in 1838.

1828. Medical College of Georgia, at Augusta.

1830. Vermont Medical College, at Woodstock; an independent charter in 1835.

1834. Washington Medical College, at Baltimore.

1834. Medical College of Louisiana, at New Orleans.

1834. Cincinnati Medical College, Ohio, about this time.

1837. Louisville Medical Institution, Ky.

1838. Medical Department of the University of the city of New York.

1838. Richmond Medical College, Va.

1838. Albany Medical College, N. Y.

1838. Medical School of Willoughby University at Willoughby, Ohio, removed and new organized at Columbus in 1847.

1840. Medical College at Cleveland, O., about this time.

1843. Rush Medical College, Chicago, Ill.

1843. Medical Department of Illinois College, at Jacksonville.

1843. Medical Department of St. Louis University.

1844. Medical Department of Missouri University, at St. Louis.

1846. Memphis Medical College, Tenn.

1846. Indiana Medical School, at Laporte.

1847. Buffalo Medical College, N. Y.

1847. Philadelphia College of Medicine, with the powers of the University of Pennsylvania, held its first Commencement in July, and is to have two courses a year.

Names of three or four more, I have not been able to obtain.

The medical schools at Providence, R. I., and at Burlington, Vt., formerly flourishing, have not been in operation for several years.

Besides the foregoing schools, which are empowered to give the degree of M. D., there are many others without this power, which are performing important services in medical education. If they were confined solely to demonstrations in Anatomy with dissections, and recitations with theses, they would accomplish a far greater amount of good in medical education. The lectures too far exceed the amount of study, and twelve to sixteen weeks are

amply adequate for lectures, and the student would derive vastly greater advantage from employing the rest of the year in recitations, and demonstrations in Anatomy. There is great necessity for reformation on this subject.

Note B, Page 16.

That the requisites for M. D., in this country are inferior to those in France, and Germany, &c., is very certain. It does not mean the same thing, as general education is respected. There are two classes of men who practice medicine over much of Europe, of very different qualifications. These distinctions are unsuited to our situation and institutions. We are not to be directed to Europe for models in this particular, as we are not in many others. Let M. D. fully imply the qualifications which many of our medical schools are amply able to impart, and which the Berkshire does impart.

Note C, Page 17.

“The Proceedings of the National Medical Conventions” of 1846 and 1847, published by order of the “American Medical Association,” contain much information of high interest to the medical student and practitioner. Various imperfections show that the organization has yet accomplished little in respect to improvement in medical education. The publication gives promise of good to come. Much more definite labor must be bestowed upon this subject, and more extensive co-operation of the profession secured.

Note D, Page 18.

In their report the Committee propose that physicians shall require proof from their students on entering the offices, that they possess a “good English education, a knowledge of Natural Philosophy and the Elementary Mathematical Sciences, including Geometry and Algebra; and such an acquaintance, at least, with the Latin and Greek languages, as will enable them to appreciate the technical language of Medicine, and read and write prescriptions.”

Several of the older Schools, if not all of them, have bestowed the degree of M. D. upon students who were ignorant of the Latin and Greek languages, and continue to do it, and other schools have been obliged to follow them. To be of any special importance, these languages must be studied *for two or three years*. A mere smattering is valueless, and, in one fortnight a student can learn to read Latin prescriptions and write them too, without understanding the construction of the language. *Forms* are to be found in abundance. Besides, in the country and among the great body of the profession, they are almost unused. Much as I love these dead languages and valuable as is the knowledge of them to the general student, the medical student who begins his studies in the office at the age of eighteen or twenty can find much more important studies for his usefulness than that of the dead languages. It is true too, that the terms of science ever have, not a strict *etymological*

meaning, but like all language, one that is *conventional*, and the *conventional meaning* must be learned. Prescriptions ought to be in the language of the country.

What are the "Elementary Mathematical Sciences," excluding Algebra and Geometry? It was very desirable to have referred this subject to the Committee on Medical Education for another consideration.

Note E, Page 18.

In a report on this subject, it is said, that "in perhaps every medical school in the Union, the requirements are too low." "The great complaint is that *some colleges* do not enforce rigidly and honestly the existing legal requirements, low as they are. There is reason to believe, that some of the oldest and most flourishing schools are as open to this charge as the obscure and comparatively unimportant ones." "It is not expedient to recommend that the granting of licenses and degrees should be restricted to one board in each State." The evil is made obvious, and the association have not applied any possible remedy.

The time for placing *stringent restraints* on the business of life, seems to be passing away. In the State of Louisiana any man can practice in the courts of law, who can so state his case as to be understood by the judges; and, in New York, only a good moral character and a satisfactory examination are required. In the State of New York too, any man is permitted to practice medicine, who pleases, only being held responsible for *mal-practice*. Let M. D. be the same as a license to be a physician, but legal responsibility made to rest upon him who wears the honor in consequence of a satisfactory examination, and the profession will be elevated. Have not *legal* restraints on the common pursuits of life, ever proved disadvantageous? Weak is that profession that must be upheld and supported by law.

Note F, Page 22.

It is conclusive from these principles, that if the term at the Medical Schools could be extended to five or six months, not more than three months should be appropriated to lectures at the rate of six or seven a day; and that the rest of the course should be employed in study and recitations. There can not be a doubt that candidates for the degree of doctor in medicine would possess far higher qualifications. Thus the great desideratum would be secured, and, the easiest, most economical and effective method of elevating the medical profession, be adopted. The shorter lecture term would then become doubly advantageous. I can not but regret, therefore, the extension of the medical lectures of the University of Pennsylvania to five months, and think their success is undesirable.

A large class has been for weeks attending the recitations and exercises of our Reading Term.

ARMY
MEDICAL LIBRARY